



# Indigenous Literacy Day

## Classroom Activity Guide

*Image source: The Indigenous Literacy Foundation, Casuarina Street Primary School, NT*

*Australia Post is committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and reconciliation. We're proud to be partnering with the Indigenous Literacy Foundation to help children in remote communities get better access to quality, new books. We're supporting the delivery of books to give children in these remote regions more opportunities to read and build their literacy skills.*



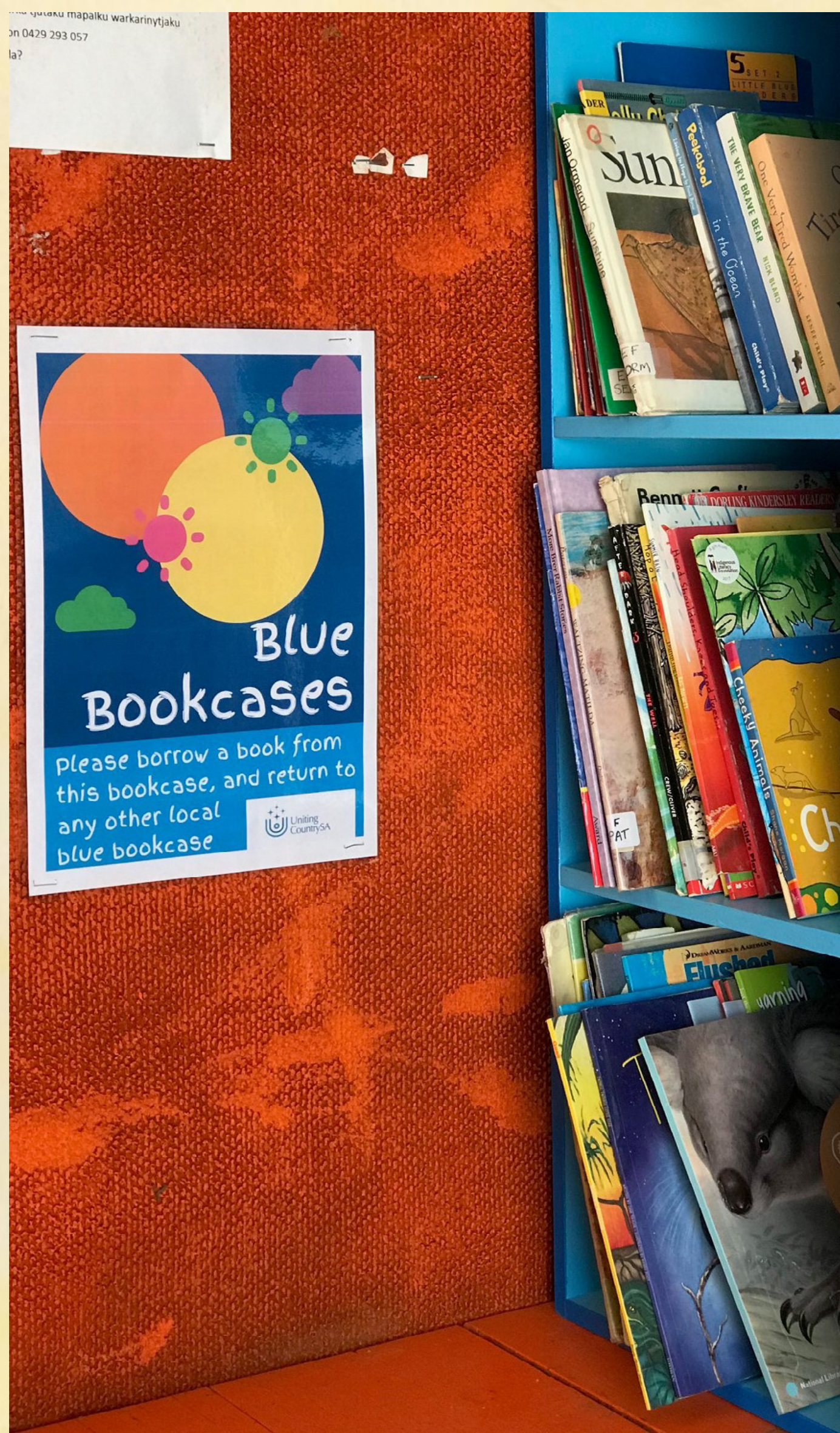


Image source: Indigenous Literacy Foundation, Indulkana Community, SA

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## Who is this guide for?

This guide is for classroom teachers of primary school students in years 1 - 6. It is a resource to support teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. It has been produced to support the **Indigenous Literacy Foundation** to celebrate **Indigenous Literacy Day**.

## How to use this guide

This guide celebrates storytelling as a medium. It aims to build an understanding and awareness of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories have been told and continue to be told and passed down through generations. Teachers are encouraged to select or modify the suggested activities to support the learning of the themes in the main challenge on slide 15.

The suggested activities:

- can support and guide the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.
- can be used to introduce rich and diverse texts in exciting ways.
- are accessible for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous classrooms while allowing modifications for inclusive learning when necessary.

## Learning Outcomes:

Educators will:

- build professional practice that will support educators to integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait perspectives.
- reflect on individual practices to build cultural capacity.

Students will:

- collaborate with peers through planning, creating and sharing stories.
- develop language and shared understandings through narrative driven learning.
- deconstruct and reconstruct through modelled learning.
- explore connectedness to the local community, Country and place.
- celebrate individual expression and cultural identity.
- learn through digital technologies.



# Australian Curriculum Links

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

### COUNTRY

- Australia has two distinct Indigenous groups: Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and within those groups there is significant diversity (OI.1)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place (OI.2)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have holistic belief systems and are spiritually and intellectually connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways (OI.3)

### CULTURE

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have many Language Groups (OI.4)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing (OI.5)

## Language, Literature and Literacy

- Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1714)
- Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements, for example illustrations and diagrams (ACELY1661)
- Use interaction skills including turn-taking, recognising the contributions of others, speaking clearly and using appropriate volume and pace (ACELY1788)
- Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about key events, ideas and information in texts that they listen to, view and read by drawing on growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features (ACELY1660)



## Author in Focus

# Sally Morgan

Sally Morgan belongs to the Palyku people of the Pilbara, and is a former Ambassador for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.

Some of her books include; **Can You Dance?**, **My Place**, **My Country**, **Little Birds Day** and **Girls Can Fly**. For as long as she can remember, she wanted to write, paint and tell stories.



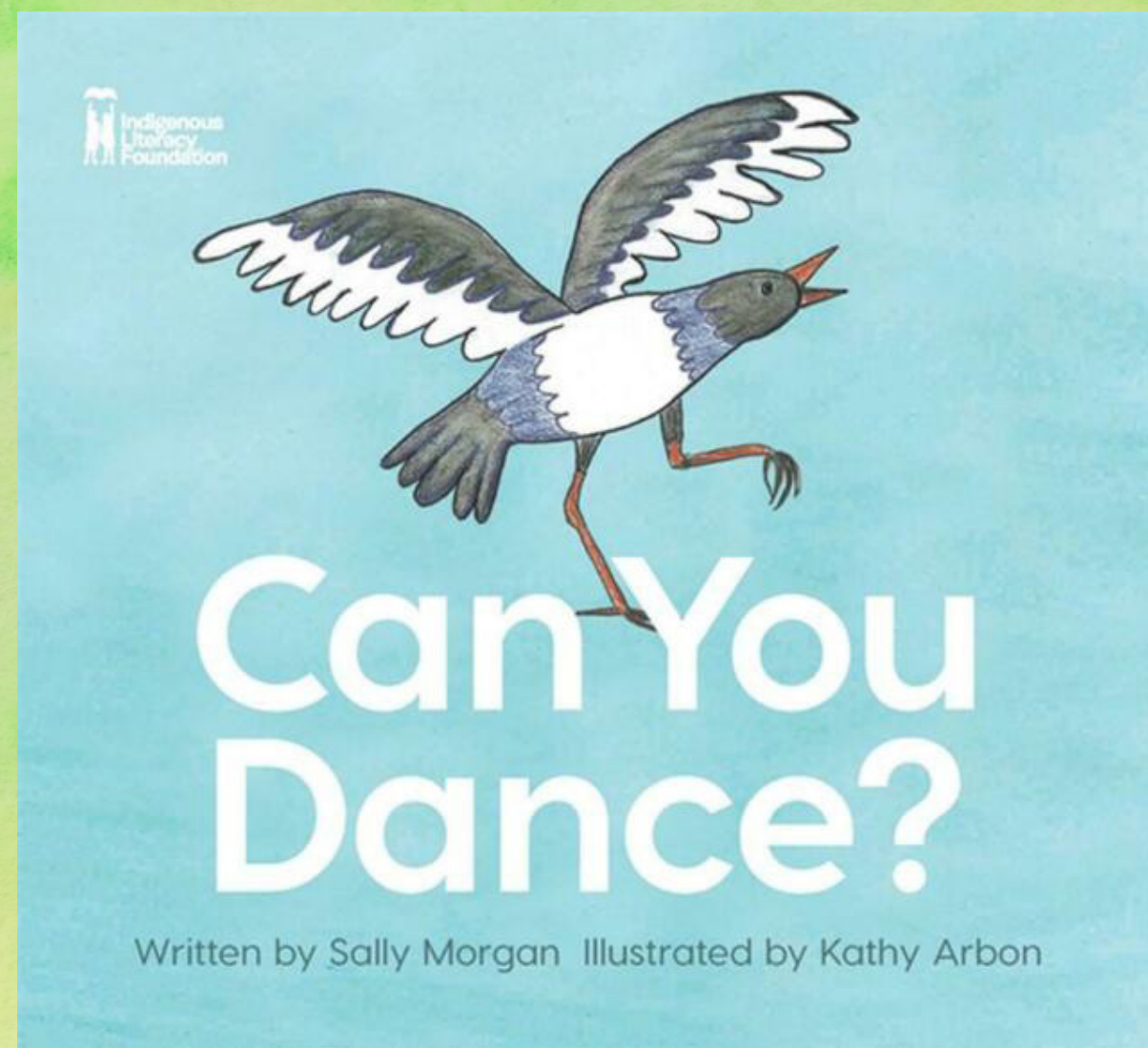
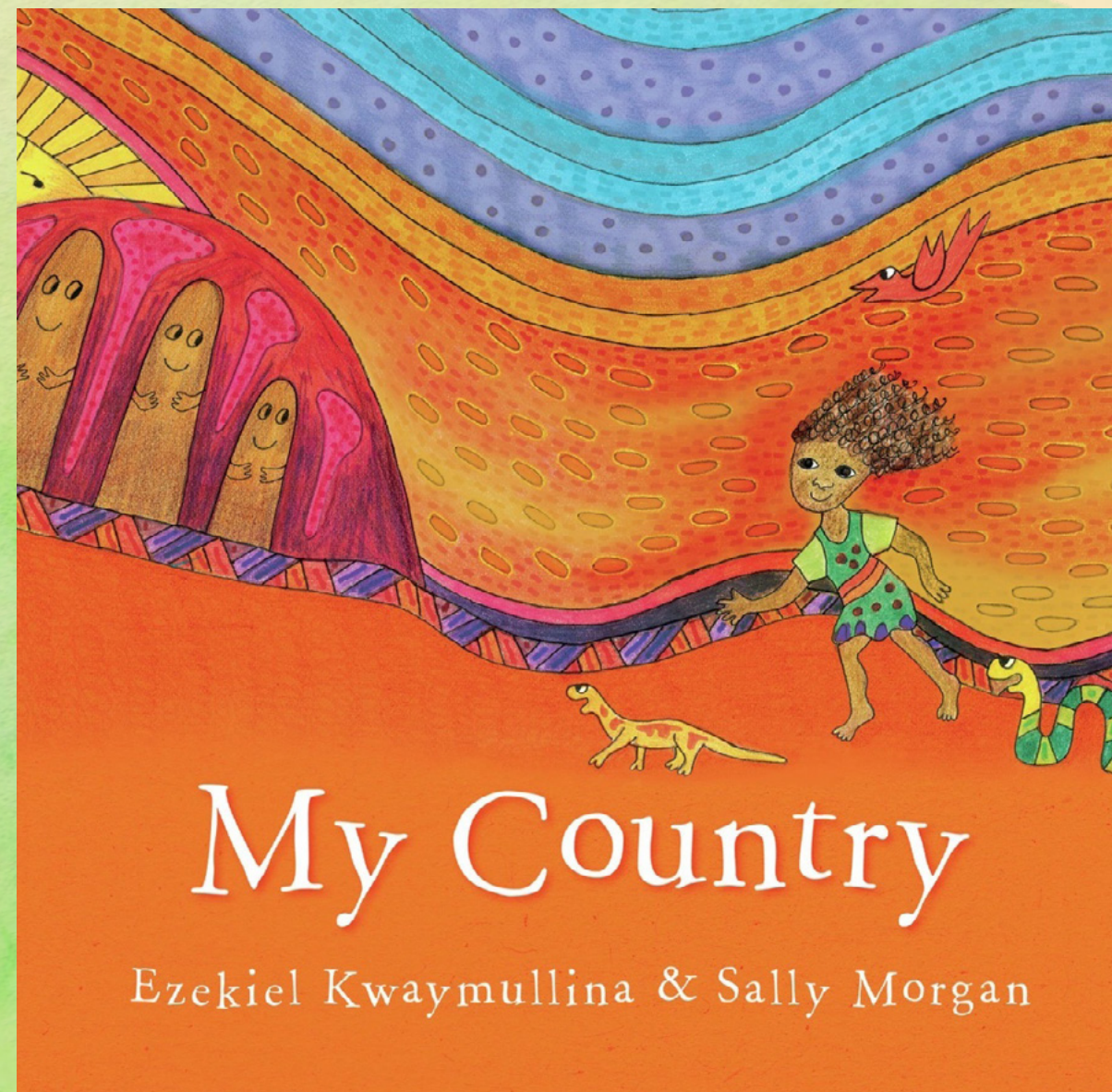
*An Australian Classic*



## My Place

SALLY MORGAN





## Songlines and Storytelling

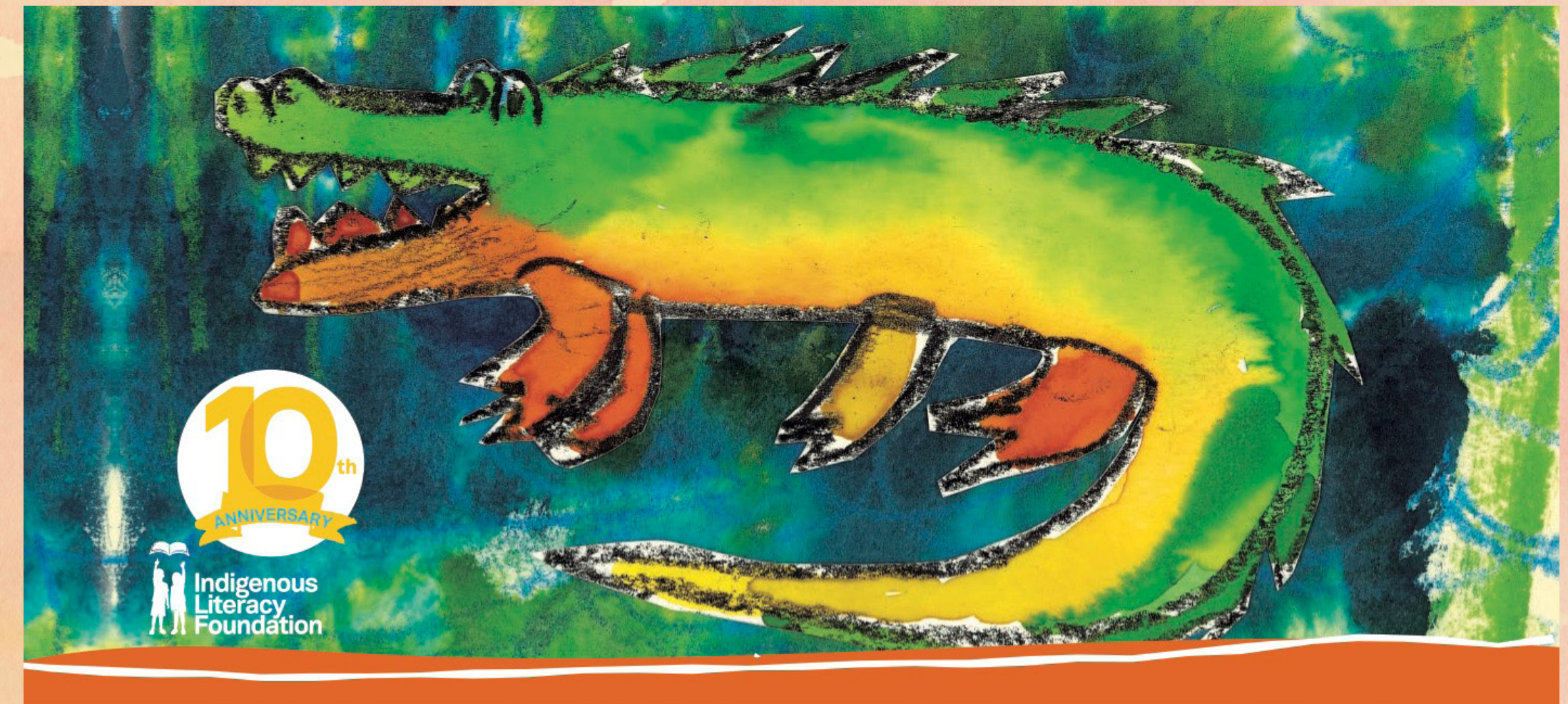
- Songlines are the Dreaming tracks which trace the journeys of ancestral spirits as they create the country, land, waterways, animal and the important knowledge and cultural practices that go with these creations. They have important spiritual connections for Aboriginal Peoples, and can include significant landforms and features.
- Students can explore making connections with local land as they walk around the school grounds and nearby surroundings. They might notice significant places and special features of the natural environment.
- Explore 'My Country' by Ezekiel Kwaymullina and Sally Morgan. The story uses a picture book narrative to explain the relationship and sense of belonging a young girl feels for her country. Students explore the ways people share their sense of belonging to Country and their identification to it.
- Songlines are transmitted orally from generation to generation through songs, stories and dances that can inform specific cultural practices and family relationships. This means that there is limited information to be found about them online or in written form. How else can we share stories?



# Activity 1 – Mapping our Stories through Songlines

Introduce students to the concept of Songlines by explaining that they can connect us in different ways.

1. Print out a blank map of Australia (<https://www.mapsofworld.com/australia-outline-map.htm>). Find the location setting in the story 'My Place' and mark on the map. What can we learn about the landscape and culture in each of the places?
2. Celebrated Indigenous Author, Sally Morgan's book 'My Place for Young Readers: Sally's Story' charts the history of her family. How could you best chart your family history? Could you tell your story through song, art or dance?
3. Can you think of examples in other countries and cultures of certain songs that are used to remember certain historical places or events. What is special about these songs?
4. Are there songs you already know that you think will be remembered in decades or even centuries to come? Why is that?



*Image source: Illustration from No Way, Yirrikipayi! by students from Milikapiti School and Alison Lester, published by Indigenous Literacy Foundation.*



# Activity 2 - Explore Indigenous Storytelling

Select a Dreaming story or picture book by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander author that your students are familiar with. Explore the story by deconstructing the language, reconstructing the narrative structure and examining the descriptive language. Suggested titles include; *Moli det bigibigi (Molly the Pig)* by Karen Manbullo, *Silly Birds* by Gregg Dreise or *No Way Yirrikipayi!* by children from Milikapiti School, with Alison Lester.

<div>Before the Story</div> <div>What do you think the story is about?</div>	<div>Deconstruct</div> <div>Examine story for time, place and country.</div> <div>What kind of language is used?</div>	<div>Reconstruct</div> <div>Focus on time phrases and structure. Use learning maps to show complication and resolution.</div>	<div>Non Linear</div> <div>Focus on descriptions of the birds and landscape. How do they help express connections to country?</div>	<div>After the Story</div> <div>Did you have a personal connection to the story?</div> <div>What is the message?</div>
<div>Draw the story</div> <div>Can you map out the story with images, symbols and draw key events/animals?</div>	<div>I see</div> <div>What could you see?</div> <div>Draw characters, animals, environment.</div>	<div>I think</div> <div>What did it make you think about?</div> <div>Can you paint your feelings?</div>	<div>I wonder</div> <div>Are there any questions you have now?</div> <div>Make a question box.</div>	<div>I know</div> <div>What ideas/ skills has this story reinforced?</div>



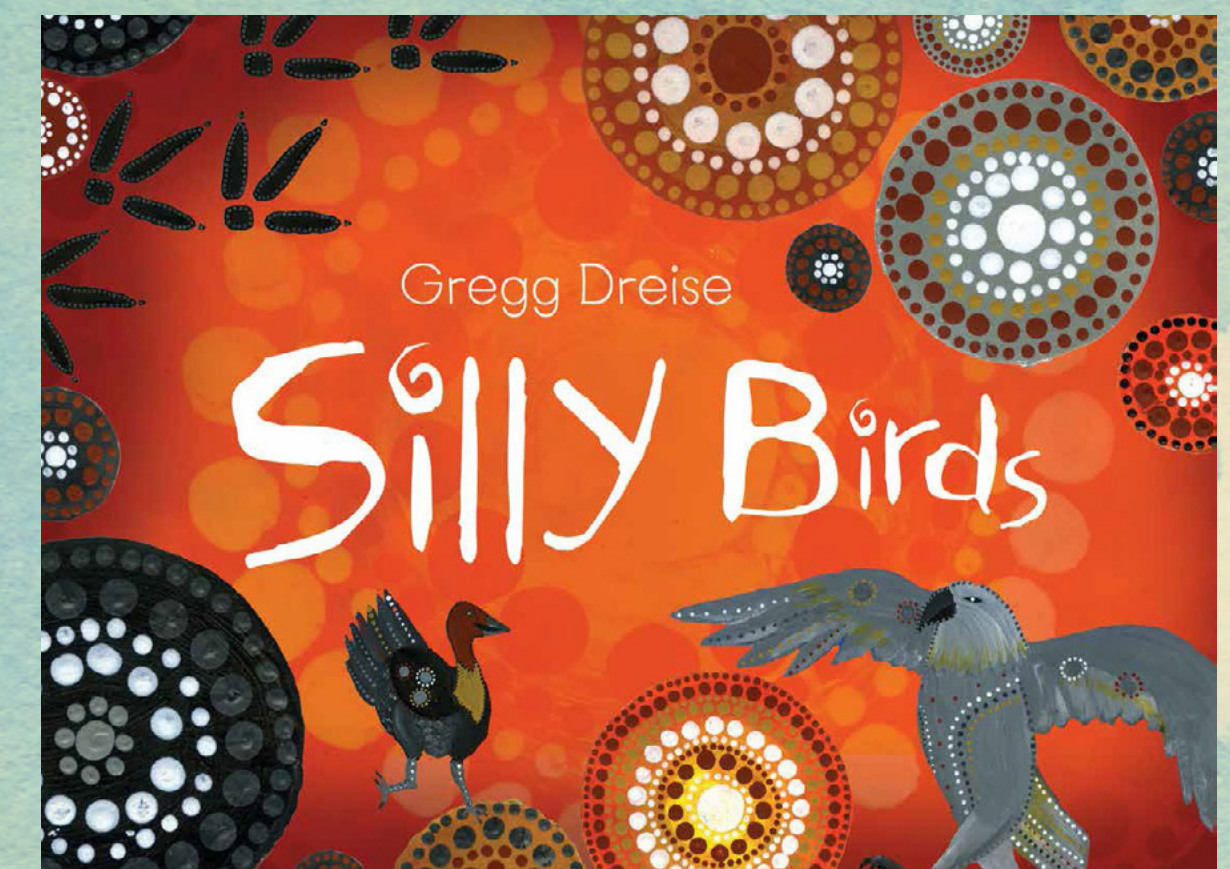
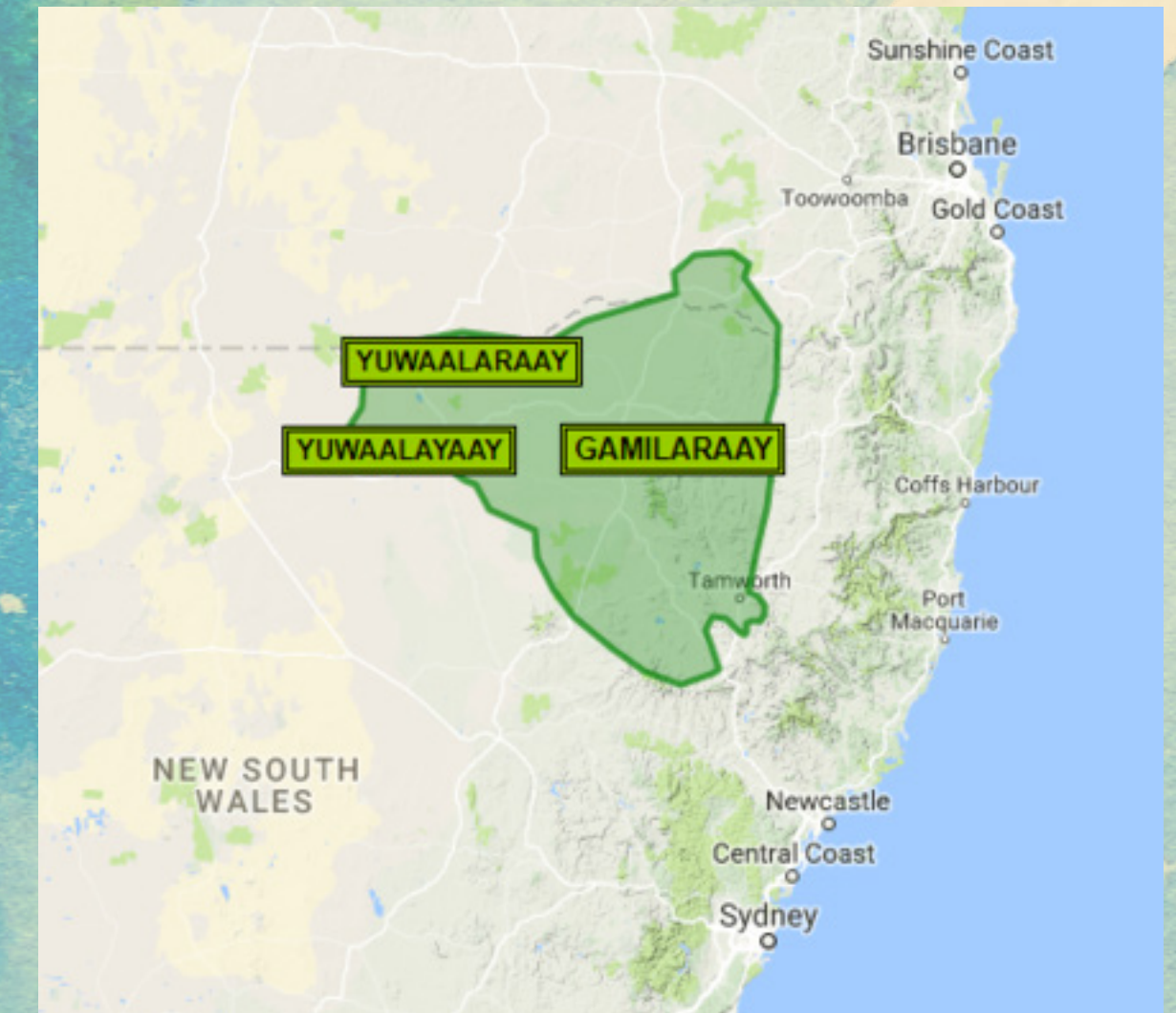
## Author in Focus

# Gregg Dreise

Kamilaroi and Yuwalayaay man Gregg Dreise is one of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation Ambassadors.

Some of his books include Silly Birds; Kookoo Kookaburra, Mad Magpie and Cunning Crow.

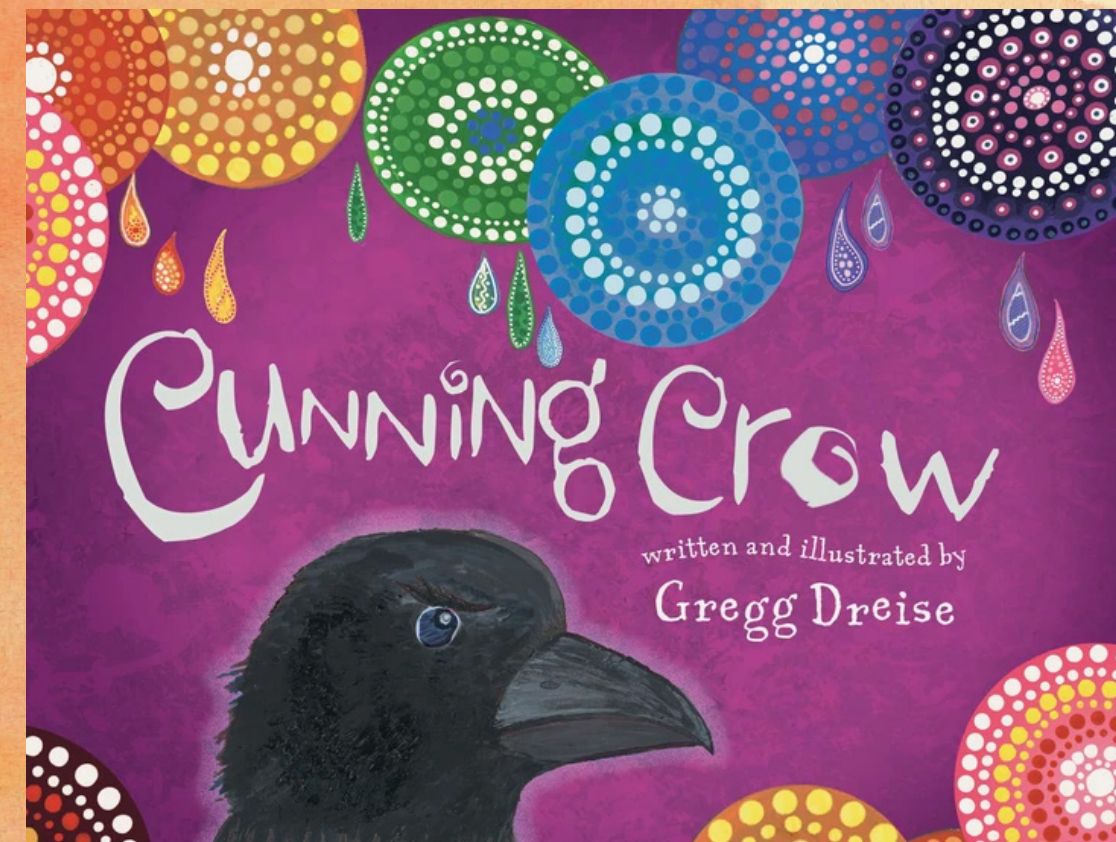
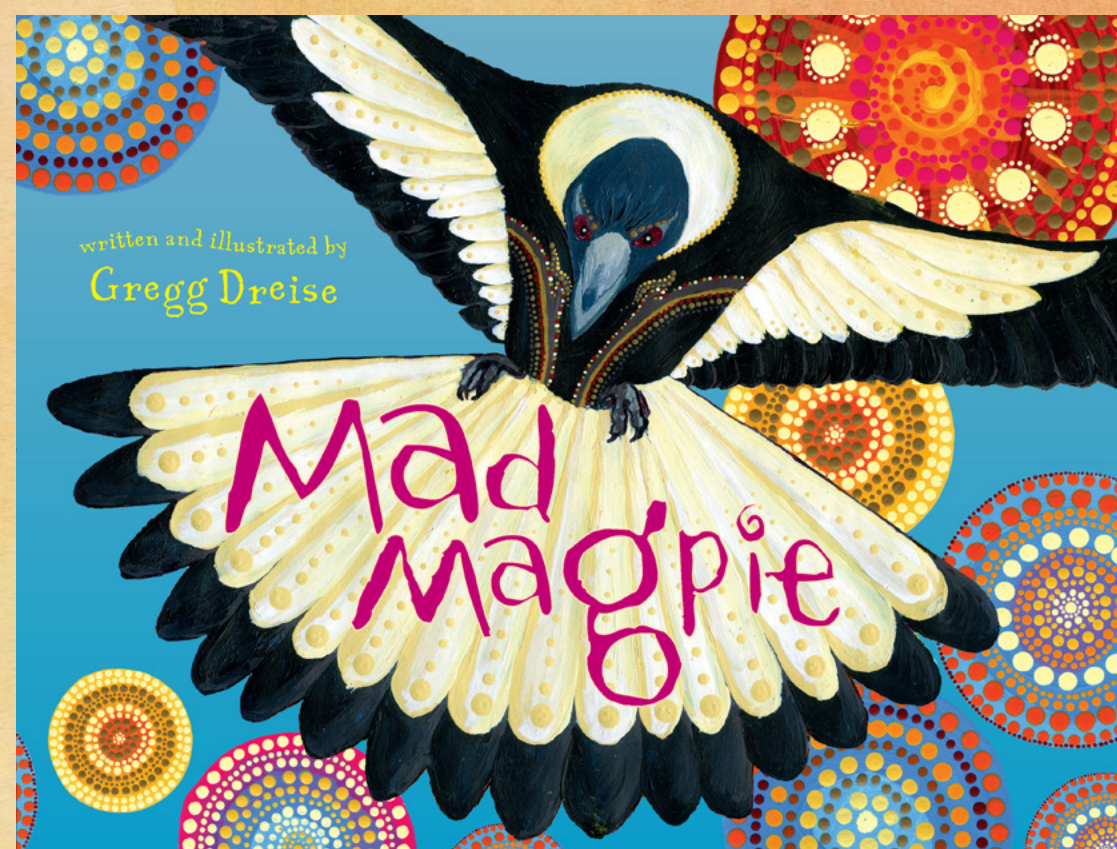
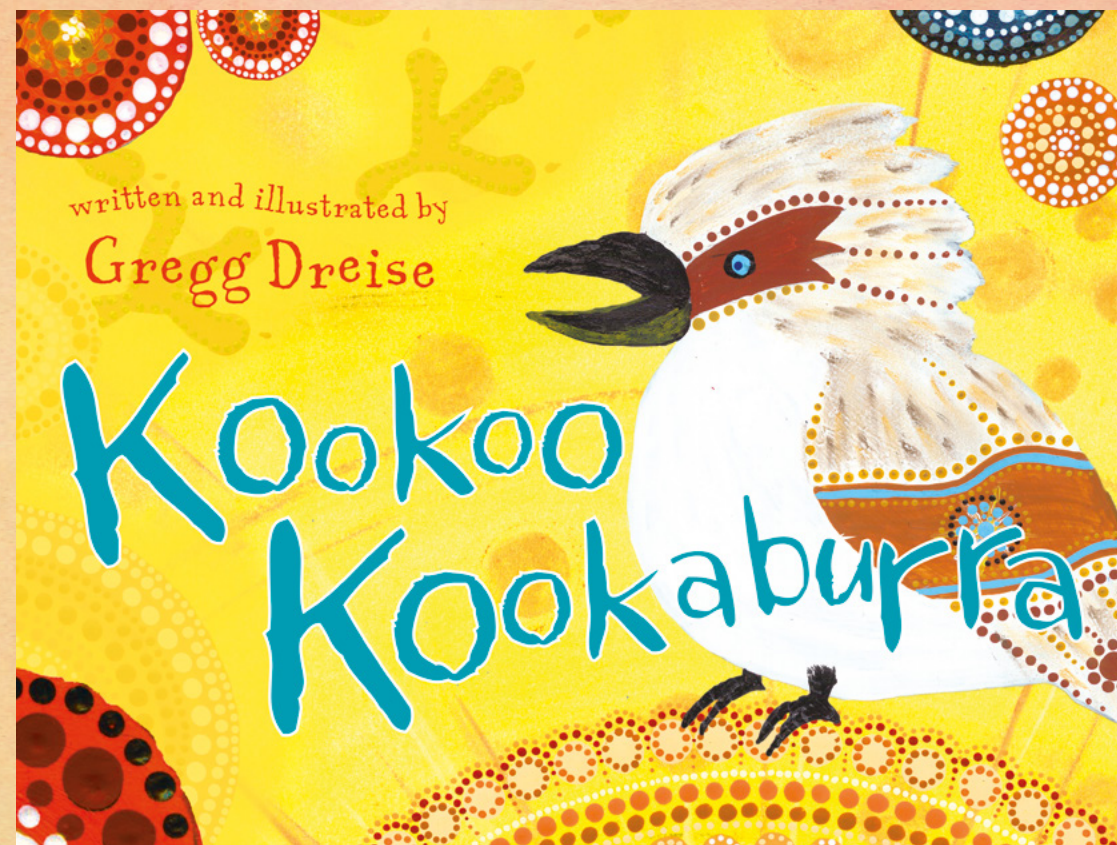
He is an artist, storyteller and musician and is currently working on his new book Awesome Emu for release in 2021.





## Dreaming, Land and Country

- Many aspects of the land, sky and waterways, including plants and animals, have special connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and are specific to Country, land or place.
- Some of the Dreaming stories about how specific natural features, including landforms, waterways, plants and animals were created, have now been published for all to read.
- Author Gregg Dreise features birds in many of his books, why do you think this is? How do the birds connect to his local culture and Country?
- Consider the ways in which Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' connections to Country, land or place, could inform an action plan for protecting land and country.





## Activity 3: Connection to Country

Connect with your school's Indigenous education leaders or local Elders to find out more about the cultural significance of land, country and/or place to them.

Use an outdoor learning space, encourage students to take note of special places in the playground to begin an introduction to the concept of 'Country.'

First Nations local  
community history

What special places  
are in my school and  
community?

This place is special to  
me because...

Why do they feel this place is significant? Does it have a special memory?

- Photograph, draw or represent your special place.
- Research a Dreaming Story and explore how animals, land and waterways were created.
- In pairs, have students discuss why they feel a place in their school or community is special.

*Differentiation: Support students to make links to things they already know. Encouraging creativity and innovation allows students to take advantage of their individual abilities.*



# Activity 4: Oral Traditions

## Planning a Story

Consider how you might include a special animal or animal connected to the local area in a story.

Start a story circle and create a timeline to map key events using yarn or wool passed from child to child. Prompt students with questions such as:

- what adventure could the animal go on next?
- where would you put that on the story timeline?



Image source: The Indigenous Literacy Foundation, Casuarina Street Preschool, NT

## Telling a Story

The use of a ‘yarning circle’ is an important process within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Yarning circles are not just places to share stories, they are important places to:

- build respectful and positive trusting relationships.
- create a safe place to speak and respond, to resolve issues and move forward.
- develop reciprocal teaching and learning.

Yarning circles can be used to encourage the sharing of ideas and stories throughout the school day. A ‘talking piece’ can also be used to make it clear who is talking and who is listening.

*Differentiation: Many students require a range of non-verbal strategies to help them to make connections to and understand the learning. Are there non-verbal cues that are part of the cultures of the students that could be incorporated?*



# Activity 5: New Ways of Storytelling

## Recording Your Story

- Create a storyboard through Canva or Powerpoint before you begin.
- Record your story using digital technologies such as the voice memo app or Garageband.
- Bring characters to life with Shadow Puppets Edu or Adobe Spark video.
- Create a stop motion animation film through a series photographs, drawings or claymation.

## Performing Your Story

***Can You Dance?*** by Sally Morgan invites young readers to connect with the book's wild characters through action and movement! Flap your wings like a magpie, stomp your feet like a wombat and shake your tail like a lizard to show that you can dance! Share this story to inspire active storytelling.

- What kinds of things can you show about the characters in your story?
- Can you dance or sing your story? Celebrate individual expression and unique cultural identity.
- Can you make a soundscape to represent the seasons in your story?

*Differentiation: How can you work with these kinaesthetically (e.g. sequencing cards)? Visually (e.g. diagrams, symbols as memory aids)? Introspectively (e.g. personal reflection)?*



# Assessment Activity: The Pen Pal Club Challenge

Storytelling has been a part of Australia's history for over 65,000 years. Many of these stories have been celebrated and passed down through generations.

Create a story that conveys a message about a special connection you have to local community, an animal or the environment. Send your story to a penpal, friend or family member.

Make your story unique and include a variety of storytelling techniques. It can be written, recorded, include art or mixed media.

Think about:

- could you incorporate images or music?
- could your story be passed down through future generations?
- what could it teach others?

Find inspiration, relevant templates and more support on teaching the skills of letter writing. Go to [auspost.com.au/penpalclub](https://auspost.com.au/penpalclub)



Image source: The Indigenous Literacy Foundation  
Lanjarra Community (Howard Island)